

February 16, 2017

Dear Appropriations Committee,

I am concerned about the proposed FY 2018-19 Governor's Budget for the following reasons,

- Continue the cuts from this year (FY 2017) which resulted in a 45% cut in seasonal workers, closure of 3 campgrounds, and reductions in services for the public across the state.
- Eliminate the Council on Environmental Quality, a lean, effective environmental watchdog state agency. (**UNFORTUNATELY, THE UPDATE FOR CEQ IS MUCH WORSE. THE GOVERNOR'S BUDGET IMPLEMENTER BILL ([H.B. 7051](#)) PROPOSES TO REPEAL THE STATUTE ESTABLISHING CEQ AND WOULD REMOVE ALL REFERENCES TO CEQ FROM THE STATUTES. THIS WOULD BE A TERRIBLE LOSS FOR CONNECTICUT'S ENVIRONMENT IF IT WERE ENACTED AS PROPOSED**).
- Reduce Department of Energy & Environmental Protection professionals by another 24 positions when DEEP has already lost over 200 positions over the past decade.

Continuing to cut the budget for DEEP is undermining its critical role of protecting State Parks and Forests, the waters of the State, air quality, wildlife, and generally safeguarding Connecticut's quality of life. My favorite State Park/Forest is important to me because it provides social, health and recreational connections to nature which is so important our culture. State Parks provide over \$1 billion/year and support over 9,000 jobs and are worth the investment (every \$1 invested in the Parks returns \$38 to Connecticut's coffers). The great value that State Parks and Forests provide to Connecticut can be lost if they continue to be cut and neglected. We hope the Committee will take the following actions: 1) support a dedicated, non-lapsing account where revenues generated by DEEP can be used to hire seasonal workers, maintain State Parks, and provide critical public services; and 2) support ideas such as the Passport to the Parks which generate NEW revenues to offset the proposed cuts.

Sincerely,

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The benefits are Endless!!!